



The Christian Radical



Celebrating 75 Years of The
Catholic Worker Movement!

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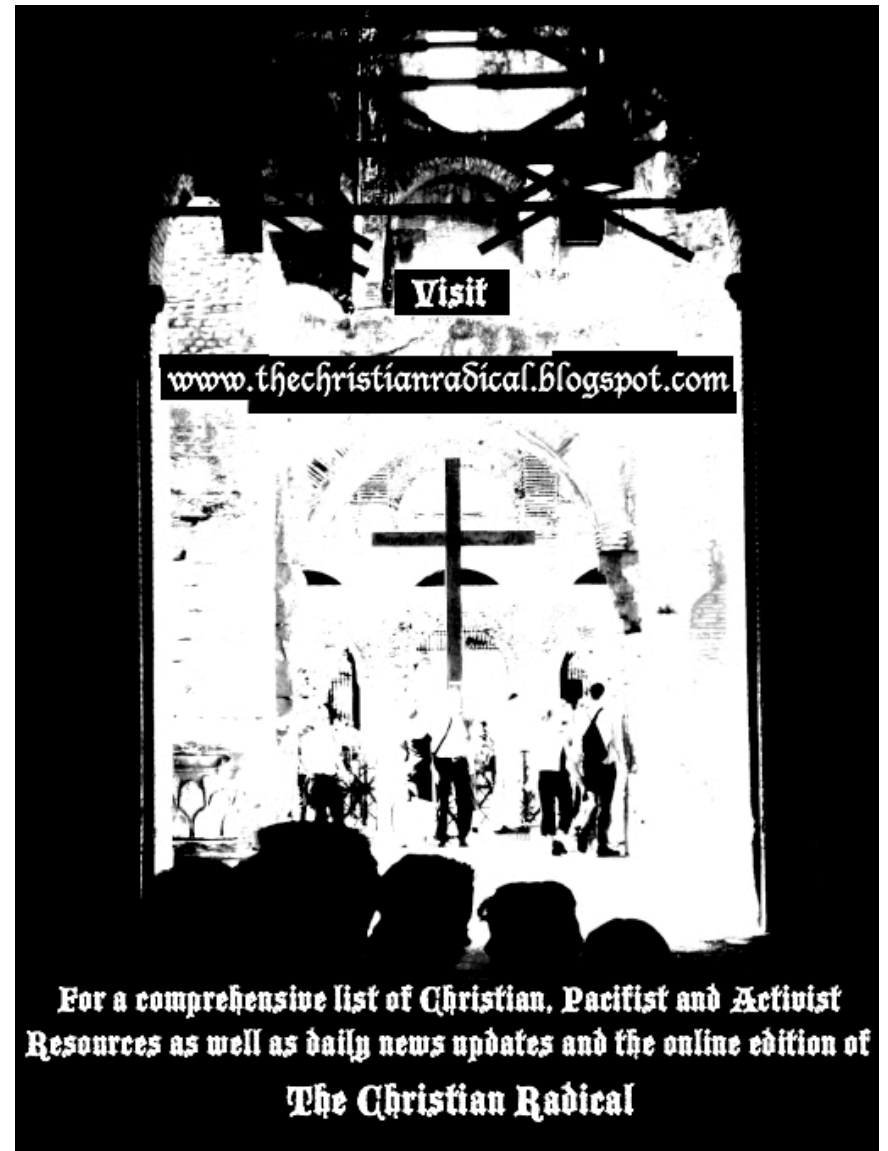
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There Goes the Neighborhood! Catholic Worker Houses of Hospitality

Excerpted from *"Nonviolence in the Arena"*
 Jo Clare Hartsig and Walter Wink, Editors



Maryhouse, Dorothy Day's last residence in New York City, is located down the street from a building that houses the local Hell's Angels chapter. These two entities anchor a block in the Bowery, where it is not unusual to see people drinking alcohol and using drugs at all hours of the day and night. It is also not unusual to witness the kinds of violence that have become part of the culture of the addicted. Singer Tom Waits uses a line that could aptly describe this locale, as well as that of many of the Catholic Worker houses

throughout the US, when he claims to live "in a rooming house on the corner of Bedlam and Squalor." Yet inside the walls of Maryhouse and St. Joseph's House a kind of holy bedlam prevails. Guests, volunteers, residents, visitors: all are welcomed and embraced as brothers and sisters. There is time set aside for prayer and for work, for study and for celebration, for discussion and for meals, and to listen to those who are unaccustomed to being heard. It is a place of hospitality, where people who would have no possibility of ever meeting one another sit down to the same table and break a common loaf. The usual divisions of culture, class, race, and ability (mental and physical) are overcome...for the moment. It is simple, but not always easy. There is conflict at Catholic Worker houses, as there is in any intentional community. However, a commitment to

nonviolence includes the commitment to work through conflict in ways that lead to reconciliation. The Catholic Worker houses of hospitality are crucibles of compassion in a culture that is frequently hostile and violent and usually indifferent.

Part of the charm and energy of the Catholic Worker is that each "house" and community has its own particular way of embodying the philosophy and mission of the CW movement. In Denver, the Catholic Worker House has become a "nonviolence zone." Guests and volunteers are asked to observe a nonviolence pledge, which includes avoiding abusive language and behavior, surrendering weapons, and even considering the violence content of television programming when deciding what to watch in the house. This pledge extends even to police officers who come to the house in search of crime suspects. An officer willing to disarm is invited into the house; otherwise he or she is asked to wait at the door while a staff member notifies whoever is being sought that the police are waiting to speak with him or her. The pledge, developed by the members of the Sisters of Loretto, has been adopted by a number of shelters, schools and other local organizations.

It is a constant challenge to maintain a spirit of nonviolence in the neighborhood surrounding the Denver house, according to Anna Koop, a member of the Loretto Community, who has been at that Catholic Worker for almost twenty years. A recent example she cites is a weekend of carnage in the neighborhood where violent drug deals erupted into two shootings and a stabbing. She and others at the house felt completely overwhelmed. Their response was to move their daily prayers outside. They now gather in a nearby park for about a half hour of centering prayer, letting their silence filter out to the activities of the surrounding "drug bazaar." It has been a powerful experience. Says Anna, "literally, people walk through my prayers." Their presence is respected. Park regulars know they are welcome to join the group but more often will ask for prayers for friends and family members. The nonviolent presence of the Denver Catholic Worker has seeped out of the house and into the nearby park!

Even beyond their own neighborhoods, Catholic Workers are involved in nonviolent actions of many kinds. Often the targets of direct action are those entities deemed responsible for creating and maintaining the poverty that spawns violence. Catholic Workers have supported nonviolent labor struggles such as

the United Farmworkers campaigns. Young men who are conscientious objectors to military service have been part of the Catholic Worker community for years. There have also been a number of Catholic Workers involved in protests at the Pentagon, decrying the millions spent on weapons of mass destruction as a theft from the poor of the world.

Catholic Workers have been among Plowshares activists arrested for the symbolic beating of swords into plowshares at nuclear facilities in the US and abroad. Often these protesters are sentenced to lengthy jail terms where their nonviolent witness continues within the prisons, which house what is perhaps the most concentrated forms of violence our culture has to offer.

The twin testimonies of nonviolence and hospitality bubble up from the power and promise of life lived in community. Dorothy Day says it best in *The Long Loneliness*:

The most significant thing about the Catholic Worker is poverty, some say. The most significant thing is community, others say. We are not alone anymore. But the final word is love. At times it has been, in the words of Father Zossima, a harsh and dreadful thing, our very faith in love has been tried through fire... We have all known the long loneliness and we have learned that the only solution is love and that love comes with community. It all happened while we sat there talking, and it is still going on. ✱



BC Leadership Prayer Breakfast

Held on Friday, April 11, 2008

Dave Diewert

Reflections:

The annual BC Leadership Prayer Breakfast is an annual event attended by the political, business and non-profit leaders in the province. Among the gathered elite are also various folks from local christian churches and organizations. Those attending number roughly 1,000, and there is a head table comprised of especially honored guests (provincial and municipal political leaders, business executives, civil servants, and representatives from the non-profit sector). In addition, each year features a special guest speaker, someone who has achieved considerable success in his or her particular field of endeavor. This year it was Philip Mangano, the head of the national housing and homelessness initiative in the United States. As one might guess, the topic of the breakfast gathering was homelessness and the need for solutions.

The great irony of the whole affair was that the spectacular and sophisticated setting for the breakfast (Westin Bayshore), the provision of a fine breakfast with all the fancy table settings, and the pomp and ceremony around the arrival of honored guests at the head table, could not have been more remote from the experience of homelessness and life on the street. And of course, the speakers did not include a single person who had experienced homelessness, who knew that reality of deprivation and exclusion. I couldn't help but think that while we sat around elaborately set tables and enjoyed a fine breakfast and coffee hearing a speech on homelessness, there were thousands without homes waking up to shivering cold, malnutrition, maybe even a kick from a cop or private security employee. It was actually those who were the topic of our morning gathering who most needed the food we were all consuming.

It made me think of Luke 14, the story of Jesus in the setting of a large banquet of the social elite. His first act was to heal a man with dropsy, a physical condition in which the body retains excess liquids while the person suffers from unquenchable thirst. The problem of dropsy is the endless consumption of what one already has in excess, and the healing of the dropsical character sets the

stage for the conversation Jesus has with the affluent guests and hosts of the banquet. His challenge was simple: when you host a banquet, don't invite your family and wealthy friends, but invite the poor, the crippled, the lame and the blind, i.e., those excluded due to deformity, deficiency, poverty and social disdain. This message was undoubtedly shocking to the guests at the party. Apparently, it did not inform the BC Leadership Prayer Breakfast event on homelessness.

At our morning banquet, homelessness was cast most forcefully in the discourse of a social and economic problem to be solved. Mr. Mangano told us that the moral arguments about basic human obligations toward our neighbor don't get any traction on this issue; it was the inefficient economics of managing homelessness that best activates new strategies of problem solving. So it turns out that surrounding homeless people with various support services is very costly and ineffective; what we heard was that funds directed toward providing actual housing was the best strategy. Wow – homelessness can be tackled most effectively by building homes for people. I'm glad we had someone really important and credentialed tell us that.

Of course most disturbing was the silence and absence of anyone who was homeless, the resultant objectification and stereotyping of them, and the way that the problem-solving discourse eliminates from view the structural causes of homelessness: the inherent inequality of our economic system, the unjust contours of social and political power, the unquestioned legitimacy of the status quo, and the mechanisms of discipline and punishment it perpetuates against the poor it creates. The wealth and power gathered in that conference room were never questioned; the privilege and status of the guests was never



problematized; the benefits and interests that the social and economic structures bestow on those attending were never unmasked and challenged as the real cause of increasing homelessness and poverty.

Homeless people are a problem to be solved by government intervention, corporate investment and private donations. They are the objects of programs and schemes of the powerful, clients of various human service systems of social control, targets of judicial and enforcement initiatives. They didn't emerge on that particular morning as human faces with stories, agents of caring action, neighbors with creative insight, or citizens possessing remarkable capacities to contribute to their community. They were faceless, voiceless ghosts whose presence was faintly conjured up by the disembodied language of "homelessness" set within a rational discourse of business economic problem solving.

I left the hotel deeply troubled, among other things because this whole event was given religious sanction and legitimization. After all, it was a prayer breakfast, a gathering for those of faith to acknowledge the reality of the divine One in our world. Religious faith served a subtle but powerful role of reinforcing the arrangements and speeches of the political and social elite as acceptable and approved. If for Christians, Jesus is the supreme manifestation of the divine will, the one in whose footsteps we are to follow, then how could that gathering on April 11th not be construed as totally incommensurate with the way of Jesus and the kingdom of God? To have a banquet and not invite the poor, the homeless, the labelled, and the excluded would be unthinkable to One who was always criticized by those in power for hanging around disreputable people and social outcasts. Although those present who would define themselves as followers of Jesus might have felt quite honored to be there, or count themselves privileged and blessed to share in that occasion, I wonder if, from the perspective of the gospel, it wasn't more like an act of betrayal, a grave sin from which we need to repent. It is the "faithful" who are most in need of conversion.

Lord, have mercy on us all. ✱



The Roots of my Resistance

Sarah Bjorknas

In my ongoing struggle with the Catholic Church I've reached a new space. Quite some time ago (a few years in fact) I realized the very important distinction between faith and religion. And so, my faith in God is not hindered or tainted by my constant disappointment in my Church. The loyalty and attachment that I have had for the Church has been constantly eroded and challenged by my growing understanding of what Jesus taught us about the love of God and how to be community. So I haven't been attending church at all since last October because it just wasn't adding anything to my spiritual life. I'm finding it too contradictory to sit there where the priest is sharing good insights on spiritual life and the congregation are in the moment and tuned in and all the while, the existence of this institution is propped up by bureaucratic, socially and politically conservative, land owning, state owning, bank operating, spirit stifling, Latin speaking men.



So why has it taken so long for me to throw up my hands and abandon my church going ways? Well, first of all it's not the concept of 'church' that's the problem, it's the real human institution. And so there will always be benefit to coming together as community to learn and discern and to worship our Creator. I think that continuing to value that has made me (in the past, I'm not so sure about the future) take the point of view that I should stay and try to effect the change that I believe is imperative for the Church. Let me be clear that my own parish is not the problem. In fact it's a small beacon of hope in a sad church landscape. I won't bother to mention which particular event from the broader Roman Catholic church community it was that tipped me over the edge because it's just another example of the deeply flawed human institution's many mistakes. Ultimately I just feel that the Church and I are headed in opposite directions.

I know that there are folks out there who are worried about my change of direction with respect to the Church. I'm sorry about that but to be honest, this is the best thing that's ever happened to me, it's just another turn in the road of my spiritual journey. I'm very lucky because I live in a community, a faith community, so that aspect of my spiritual life continues to be nurtured and fed. I think that one reason that I didn't step over this edge before was because I always thought that I would leave the Church for some other faith community, and then realized that they are all human institutions and I would likely (almost certainly) meet the same kind of frustrations. The difference now is that I'm not looking for another spiritual home. I'm just taking time out and contemplating the roots of my resistance.

My latest reflection is that if I felt that I would want to return to attending the Roman Catholic church, I would have to be clear about where fundamental change is required. And I would have to be vocal about this. Why might I want to return, you ask. Well, that's one of those mysteries of life. It's the church environment that I grew up in, the place where my mother found much of her identity. In many ways it's a spiritual space that has room for everyone, despite the appearances to the contrary. It has been more than a spiritual home to many waves of immigrants, particularly in North America. It's the church that Dorothy Day saw as the home to the poor; it inspired her as well as scandalized her. I'd forgotten that term until just now – scandalized – yup I think that's how I'm feeling.

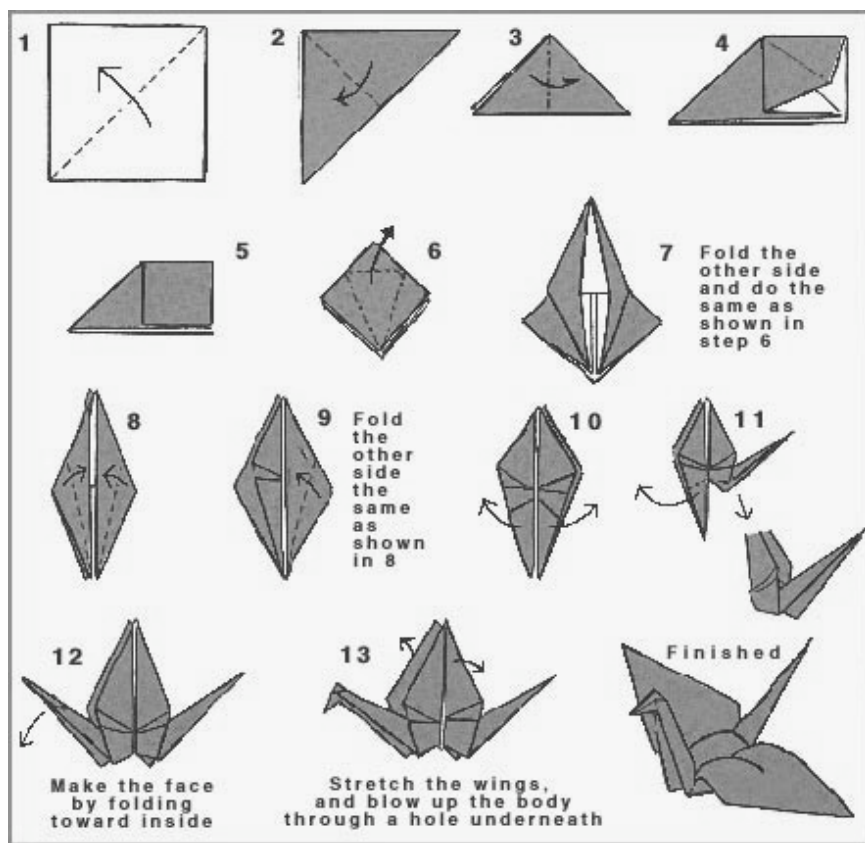
I suppose I yearn for a renewal of the vision of the Church that both Dorothy and Peter Maurin had. I suppose that I want the ability to carry on loving and promoting the 'dynamite', the radical social vision that Jesus lived and taught, preferably unencumbered by the bureaucratic clerical structures. That certainly makes sense, particularly as Vikki and I have been on this road for more than 10 years now. It's a good time for a renewal of purpose, a reaffirmation of what draws me to the Catholic Worker movement. I feel completely at home describing myself as a christian anarchist and a pacifist. I wouldn't have 10 years ago. 10 years ago I aspired to that but really had no idea how I would get there. So I learned to stop trying to get there by just being there. And now I can't imagine being anywhere else.

What is that fundamental change I require of the Church you are asking. Well there are many changes that could be made but I think I've settled on something that is truly fundamental and can be concretely argued. And I think that it is particularly fitting to include in the writings at the time of the 75th anniversary of our movement. I think that a good starting point for constructive criticism of the Church for a Catholic Worker is on the topic of property. The Roman Catholic church has a lot of property, and as I was reminded the other day in the newspaper stories about the visit of the Pope to the U.S., the Church is in fact a State.

I will not spend time going all the way back in the history of the Church to label its sins except to point out that its State status is in fact a demotion from its previous status as an Empire. Therein lies the accumulation of wealth and property that it holds today. While it's well known that Catholics often aren't so skilled in quoting Scripture (true for me!) I'm quite sure Jesus had something to say about His kingdom not being an earthly kingdom. It's where some of His followers went off the track, being disappointed because he wasn't leading a revolt against the Romans. Everything about His public life that we can read says “this god-man was a wanderer who did not care for the security of home and stuff”. You learn quickly when living communally with a variety of people that attachment to 'stuff' is a barrier to happiness. It is also a barrier to relationships. You don't even have to be living communally to learn that lesson. If there's one thing that the Church should be about, it's relationships, and I believe that its hoard of property and art and money send exactly the opposite message. Now I didn't start out this rant with “money is the root of all evil” in mind but it appears that is where I have ended up.

I guess the thing that amazes me is that on the personal faith, parish life level (for the most part) Catholics do still concern themselves with aspects of the works of mercy and building relationships all around them. All this despite being supported by a structure that I would argue is actually corrupt. There are days when I read and hear about the activities of the Church and the attitudes and pronouncements of the Vatican and I think 'the end is nigh' because implosion is the only possible outcome of such behaviour. Now you may think that's just wishful thinking on my part, but mostly it's not. It's a heartfelt dismay about how far (light years I think) we as Christians have pulled away from the beautiful life of community and relationship that Jesus tried to teach us.

I suspect that I will continue to contemplate this problem of the Church and its property and the fact that it's a State (!) for a while. And maybe I'll come back to you with more thoughts and a plan of action. Meanwhile, join us in celebrating a vision of community that has lasted 75 years, in an era of remarkable and questionable progress. At the end of the day what matters is who and how you've loved. I truly believe that resistance is fertile and hope for many more years of it to come. ✱



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The Vancouver Catholic Worker
1143 East Pender Street
Vancouver BC Canada V6A 1W6

Thanks for reading and thanks for all of your continued support.

Chris Rooney
Karl Germyn
Editors, The Christian Radical.

Heeding the Call to Prophecy

Ellen Euclide

Jesus was a prophet. No, I am not denying His divinity, but Jesus spent his life doing the work of a prophet: publicly speaking out against the injustices of the world. Like the prophets before and after him, Jesus recognized a world full of unjust systems and also saw the potential for change. He called people to stand up and work for that change. We are all challenged to be prophets in our own world.

The work of a prophet is, at its core, to question authority and the status quo; breaking rules and calling for radical changes in the corrupt structures of the system. Prophets are not simply angry but also optimistic, seeing the potential for individuals to change the system and break the yoke of injustice. While recognizing the intense pressures of the system, a prophet nonetheless inspires others to join his fight for change. Nelson Mandela, from inside a prison cell, continued to inspire others to join his fight against the apartheid in his country. He did not let the enormity of the fight conquer his passion and remained convinced that change was possible. He and those who worked with him proved that indeed a more just system was achievable.

No matter his cause, all prophets share a very important commonality; they give a voice to the voiceless. Recognizing the voice of the oppressed was a pillar of Jesus' revolutionary thinking. We all must listen to the marginalized and join with them to overthrow their oppressors. In November, some of the Su Casa staff joined some 20,000 others at the gates of Ft. Benning to remember the victims of US imperialism in the Americas and call for an end to the economic and militaristic violence of US foreign policy. These victims of the violence in Latin America were silenced before they could be heard but those of us with the privilege of a platform need to use it to cry out against the injustice.

There are many ways to fight injustice but the work of prophecy is viewed much more harshly by the rulers than other works of service. Questioning the war machine, the corporate machine, the sexism and racism of the system, the cycle of poverty or any number of other injustices is not easy. Prophets face many dangers and hardships. Some, like Jonah in the Hebrew Scriptures, were reluctant and scared enough to deny their call to prophecy. The extent of the

injustices, though, and God's support eventually allowed Jonah to finish his journey to Ninevah. Others, like Martin Luther King Jr. and Oscar Romero, caused such anger and fear in the ruling class that they were killed. The tireless, public work of such prophets, however, allowed their work to continue despite their deaths.

The work of prophecy is very public and there are many individuals, like those mentioned above, who have become household names because of their courage and passion. All of us, however, can incorporate the call to prophecy into our lives. We must speak out against the unjust systems that we witness. Whether it is marching for peace, writing letters to congressmen or organizing educational programs to increase awareness, there are many ways to publicly take a stand. The Catholic Worker was started as a prophetic movement and through its newspapers and many political actions the movement has continued to speak with the voiceless and combat the injustices in our world. We each must find the strength to join with our brothers and sisters and follow the steps of those before us to work for a more just world. ❀



On Personalism

Chris Rooney

Four years ago when I started to meet with the Vancouver Catholic Worker community and began to read about the movement and it's philosophy online I never found a clear definition of this word. I can try and give one here: personalism is a form of Christian humanism which emphasizes individual dignity and humanity and sees them as essential to a truly common good. The problem for me though is that this short dictionary style definition of personalism doesn't satisfy me, there's so much more to this word that I want to unpack.



When I began to contemplate what a personalist philosophy might look like I thought often of the words applied somewhere to Phil Berrigan: that he read the Gospel and took it personally, that means that as an individual Christian I ought to take the good news and practice it's contents as best I can. To take the Gospel personally means that freedom for prisoners, sight for the blind, food for the starving,

loving one's enemies and giving shelter to the homeless were more than just nice metaphors or vague principles that make you feel good about your life. That instead the teachings and example of Christ require action, reflection, and deliberate sacrifice, doing with less so that friends, enemies and perfect strangers would have a little more.

Some people might talk here about "The Social Gospel" or make reference to the "social teachings of the Catholic church". But I don't have a grounding in encyclicals and know very little about the social gospel movement. I prefer Ammon Hennacy's simple way of describing how the obligations of faith play on the human soul. Ammon wrote about a "one-man revolution", this way of describing the lifelong process of conversion makes immediate sense to me.

One of the principle actions of *this* one man revolution has been an attempt to take scripture personally. There is another aspect to personalism as well, one which is more immediate and for that reason I was slower to pick it up. I think the light clicked on while I was visiting the LA Catholic Worker (LACW) for

the first time. My experiences there, the people I met, and the stories they told me all made me think that any truly personalist approach to living the gospel has to revolve around responsibility, for ones actions and for making the world around us more fully a part of God's non-violent Kin-dom. This individual and deliberate sense of personal responsibility is also a cornerstone of many secular Anarchist philosophies, and there is a need for this responsibility to be lived--and maybe seen first in others before it takes on it's fullest meaning.

I like to think that practicing the works of mercy is a pacifist's way to apply propaganda of the deed: the belief that by taking direct revolutionary action one will inspire others to take their own. In historical terms propaganda of the deed is almost always associated with violent acts but where it has failed as a tactic of insurrection it has, perhaps inadvertently, been one of the catalysing forces behind The Catholic Worker movement. the actions of people like Dorothy Day seem to have a way of inspiring other people to take the gospels into their own hands.

To me personalism is about two things at it's heart: it's about being directly involved in addressing and relieving the suffering of this dying world one person at a time, and it's about taking personal responsibility for my life, my decisions and my actions as a Christian and as a human being.



I fail at these things all the time, it's always easier to shift the burden of responsibility to somebody else, to make excuses or ignore a mess until someone else cleans it up. It's also difficult to love my neighbours and care for the poor at any real personal sacrifice. It's one thing to show up late to a few anti-war demonstrations a year, it's another thing to vigil five days a week for the past five years on the same street corner, to spend your life feeding hungry people on a soup line that never grows shorter, or to invite strangers into your home to live with you and provide for them out of your own pay-check no matter how many times you might get burned for it or how infrequently you get paid back.

It's always easier to walk past a person begging on the street than it is to give them some of your time or your money. And it's also easier to give that person

some money than it is to say “let’s you and I go and get some dinner, I’m buying” or to sit and listen to their story without judgement or haste.



I was once told a story about an old Orthodox Christian monk. He had lived a long and austere life and had many novices and students around him at his deathbed. One of them looked on and said “how much of a blessing it must be for you to be able to look back on your life and see how much good you’ve done with it. If anyone’s lived a holy life it must be you”. To this the dying old monk replied

“truly, I haven’t even begun to repent.”

The entire message of the Gospels and all of the stories about Christ are about personalism. Christ heals many people but He doesn’t heal unidentified masses. Each person He heals or raises from the dead was an individual with their own story. Every person who’s sins He forgives came to Him for absolution. And when He feeds those thousands of people, it was the passing along of the bread and fish from one person in the crowd to the next--unselfishly--which made those miracles possible. Even the sacrament of the mass we celebrate is about sharing, about becoming one body in Christ by partaking of His flesh and blood in the form of the bread and wine we eat together.



Jesus understood personalism better than anyone else in history and in His teaching He tried again and again to emphasize it’s importance in passages like the Sermon on the Mount from Matthew’s Gospel and with the words “The Son of Man came to serve not to be served”. ✱

Action Calls for Reflection and Practice

Phil Rivera

Growing up Catholic in the 50's and 60's we were not exposed to much of the rich tradition in Christianity. Sadly though practices like Novenas, Exposition, and the Rosary were about it. I recognize they have their place. My complaint is that the rich tradition of meditation, Lectio Divina, and contemplation were almost 100% absent for the non-monk. Contemplative Action was unheard of.

As a seminarian in the 60's, briefly meeting Philip Berrigan at his rectory, we lived front and center through Civil Rights, Catonsville 9 (my draft board!), Vatican II, Humanae Vitae - we simply were not introduced to the riches of meditation and contemplative – both essential to considered Christian witness in action.



So much in our tradition and others is available. BUT, how does it inform our work? I think it does, but how deeply?

Spending time at Catholic Workers Houses - living and serving – or traveling with groups like Witness for Peace, you experience a commitment to the poor and marginalized that will stop you dead in your tracks. 20, 30, 40 somethings on up to 80's + daily live out this commitment.

How do we ground this work? Some religiously; some spiritually. Because institutional religion has so many negative associations for many, it may not be a helpful description. Often anything like it is shunned.

STILL. Does something get lost in the process? (I am not promoting a religion, per se. Rather asking us to consider what might be thrown out with the bathwater, so to speak!)

Does something get lost? I think it does. I experience it like relishing a gorgeous sunset while looking at a video of it or perhaps looking at it while far, far away. Not immersed in it, with all the senses at work.

What is lost? A sense of focus as to meaning and purpose, a relationship with the ground of being, an inner reservoir of peace, a place for refueling and nourishment.

All too often when conversing with a committed, good, and enthusiastic person in this work, eyes glaze over at the mention of spirituality or religious roots. As I write this Benedict XVI has just completed his visit to the U.S. Without question the priest and religious abuse crisis in the U.S was abominable, especially many Bishops' handling of it. Sad as it is, I feel an even worse wrong has been perpetrated by the church - likely all churches.

What could that be you ask? It's sadly too simple. The radical message of Christ in the Gospels. So many churches eschew this message - from building fences to keep out to giving money at arm's length. Worse touting free trade agreements or bombing nations because we can.

When I returned to the faith of my youth, though radically a different person in my practice, I realize just how important a relationship with the power that is behind all - love - is. How only through this could I hope to begin to follow Him.

Reflecting on this ground of being, reading, relating, and yes of course, service. ALL these I feel must be present. At this very moment I type this simple reflection for the Christian Radical while sitting comfortably in the home of a marvelously good and generous young couple in Oklahoma City. Connected with Catholic Worker here, they are joyful people deeply immersed in their practice (Church of the Nazarene) and in social justice work. My point?

The point is that praying and reading alone will not do. But it is essential.

Action itself will not do, but it is essential.

These joined together with reflection are essential.

The realization here as well at Haley House in Boston or Witness for Peace or in the eyes of my 9th graders - in each case, it is the realization and yes the celebration of the goodness they embody. The reality that they open themselves

completely to the love that is the ground of being, whether we call that being God or Jesus or Yahweh or Allah or ... AND that this love is experienced as goodness. A goodness that is rooted in reflection and nurtured in practice in meeting that love, God, Christ... in each person we meet and serve. It is not I that is doing good, but God through me.

I would like to close this reflection with encouragement to deepen our practice. Take time to reflect, to re-treat, go away a bit and reflect, think, pray, read. Refocus and nourish yourself. Go back with a practice in mind. I hate schedules, but alas, often without some structure...

Perhaps in this reflection explore further people and their work like:

John Dear S.J.
Daniel Berrigan S.J.
Martin Newell CSP
Dorothy Stang SND
Mother Antonio - Prison Angel in Mexico
Richard Rohr
Dr. Paul Farmer
Bs. Anthony Taylor
Oscar Romero
Rutilio Grande
Dorothy and Peter!



...and so many more, Jump in! ✱



Book Review

Bob Ekblad. *A New Christian Manifesto: Pledging Allegiance to the Kingdom of God.* (WJK: 2008).

Reviewed by J. Barrett Lee

Bob Ekblad's new book, "A New Christian Manifesto: Pledging Allegiance to the Kingdom of God" has been long-awaited by his friends, students, and readers. Herein, Bob has finally put into writing his experiences of "cross-pollination" between the two worlds of charismatic spirituality and social justice activism. The result of embracing this kind of cross-pollination, according to Ekblad, is that people of faith will be empowered to adopt a prophetic stance that speaks from God's perspective before the "powers and principalities" of the present world-system. This book is certain to find an audience with fans of Mike Bickle, Francis MacNutt, and John Arnott just as much as it appeals to readers of Walter Brueggemann, Walter Wink, and William Stringfellow.

The book opens with an autobiographical chapter where Ekblad tells the story of how he came to exist simultaneously in these two, apparently contradictory, worlds. In chapter two, Ekblad grounds his theology of cross-pollination in a deepened understanding of the sacrament of baptism. Chapter three continues this meditation, highlighting frustration with the current societal *status quo* as a prerequisite for openness to the kingdom of heaven. Chapter four opens the discussion of the parallel ministries of advocacy before the powers-that-be and deliverance from evil spirits. Chapter five forms the crux of the book, where the author issues the call for Christians to break with their loyalties to the powers and pledge allegiance to the kingdom of heaven. Chapter six examines the blessings and consequences of making this switch of allegiance. The final chapter emphasizes the commitment to redemptive suffering and nonviolent resistance as Christians work and wait for the kingdom of heaven to be realized on earth in its fullness.

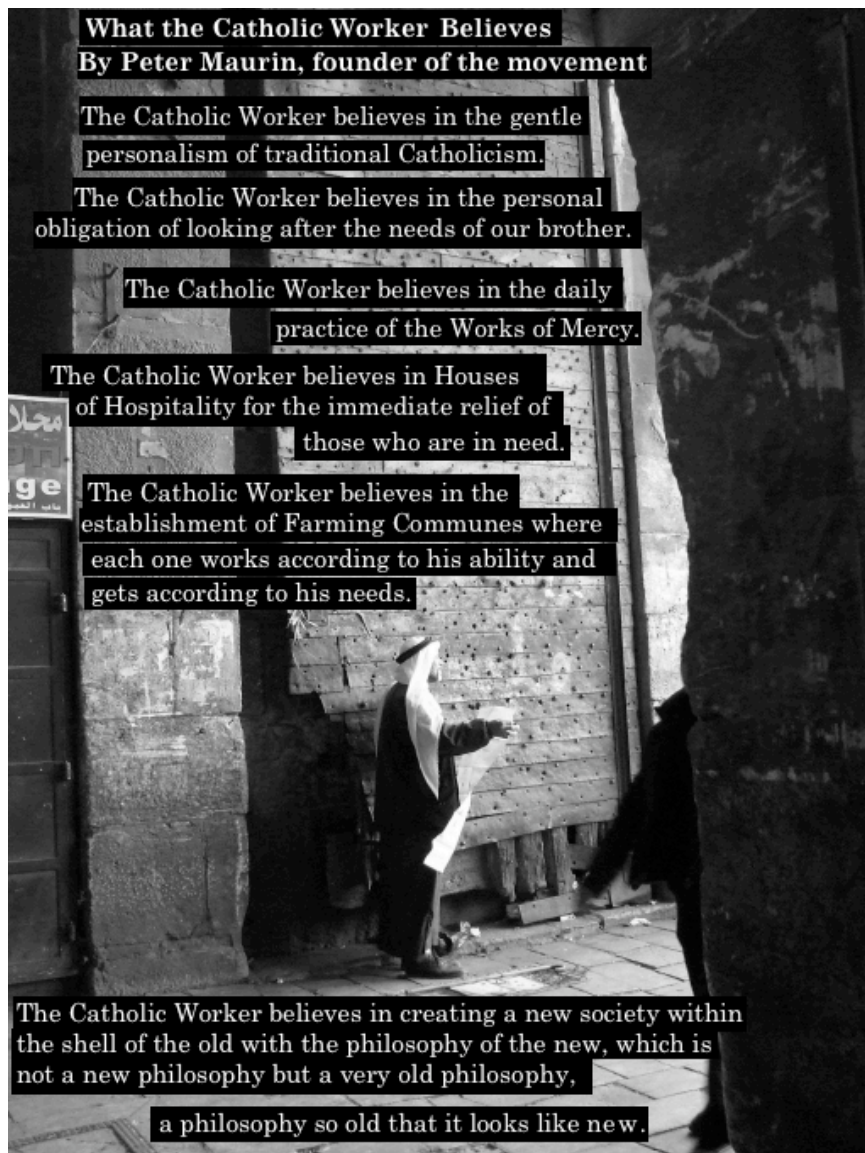
While most online summaries of this book describe it as a meditation on the Lord's Prayer, I think it would be more accurate to describe it as a meditation on the sacrament of baptism. Baptismal



and sacramental language coats the book from beginning to end. I found my own personal understanding of baptism to be transformed and enriched as I read this book. My favorite part comes from chapter two, where Ekblad likens the baptismal experience to that of undocumented migrant workers crossing over into the United States. Like them, we Christians are "illegal immigrants" who have been brought into the kingdom of heaven "outside the law". Our status in God's country is due to grace alone. If more Christians were to "remember their baptism" with this image in mind, it might have interesting repercussions for the "immigration debate" in this country. As St. Paul wrote, "So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God." (Ephesians 2:19 ESV)

In 2005, I told my friends and colleagues that if they were to read only one book that year, it should be "Reading the Bible with the Damned". In 2008, I will be telling them to read "A New Christian Manifesto: Pledging Allegiance to the Kingdom of God." ❄





We Believe so We Speak

2nd Corinthians 4:13

There Goes The Neighborhood is reprinted from Fellowship Magazine on the Fellowship of Reconciliation Website the original can be read here:

<http://web.archive.org/web/20011215011206/www.forusa.org/fellowship/fel1197-09.htm>

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Peter Maurin b. May 9, 1877 d. 1949 was visionary and co-founder with Dorothy Day of the Catholic Worker movement. He lived his whole life in holy poverty and though he never wrote a book his "Easy Essays" form a cornerstone of the movement's philosophy.

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Chris Rooney and Karl Germyn are Anarchist Christians in the Metro Vancouver area, Chris lives at Samaritan House and Karl has just moved back here from Vernon. All text editing in this issue was done by Karl except for "On Personalism", "Heeding the call to Prophecy", and "Action calls for Reflection and Practice" which were edited at the eleventh hour by Alex Iwasa, thanks Alex.

The Editors